

85 "There"

"There" can be used with a form of "be" to talk about the existence or presence of a person or thing. Sentences with "there" can be used in many different tenses.

See also:

Present perfect simple **11** Future with "going to" **17**

Future with "will" **18** Singular and plural nouns **69**

85.1 "THERE" IN THE PRESENT SIMPLE

"There is" is used to talk about singular or uncountable nouns, and "there are" is used to talk about plural nouns.

There is a hospital in my town.



There are three hospitals in my town.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

There is a market every Saturday.

There are several schools and colleges.

There is always traffic in the city.

Uncountable noun.

There are some restaurants and bars.

HOW TO FORM



85.2 "THERE" IN THE PAST SIMPLE

In the past simple, "there was" is used to talk about singular or uncountable nouns, and "there were" is used to talk about plural nouns.



There was a party here last night.

There were 150 people at the party!

FURTHER EXAMPLES

There was singing and dancing.



There was a clown to entertain the children.



There was a huge mess to clean afterwards.



There were balloons and streamers.



There were speeches after the meal.



There were waiters to refill the guests' drinks.



HOW TO FORM



85.3 "THERE" IN THE PRESENT PERFECT

In the present perfect, "there has been" is used to talk about singular or uncountable nouns, and "there have been" is used to talk about plural nouns.

There has been a decrease in client satisfaction.



There have been lots of complaints recently.



↑ "Been" doesn't change form.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

There has been increased pressure on employees.



There has been a steady rise in unemployment.



There has been a decrease in petty crime.



There has been success in hiring graduates.



There have been many new jobs advertised.



There have been some thefts in the office.



There have been more training days for staff.



There have been big bonuses this year.



HOW TO FORM

"THERE"

"HAS BEEN"

SINGULAR NOUN

REST OF SENTENCE

There

has been

a decrease

in client satisfaction.

"THERE"

"HAVE BEEN"

PLURAL NOUN

REST OF SENTENCE

There

have been

lots of complaints

recently.

85.4 "THERE" IN THE FUTURE

In the future with "will," "there will be" is used to talk about both singular and plural nouns.

There will be a fire drill on Monday.

There will be fire wardens around to help.



In the future with "going to," "there is going to be" is used to talk about singular nouns, and "there are going to be" is used to talk about plural nouns.

There is going to be a big announcement.

There are going to be big changes!



FURTHER EXAMPLES

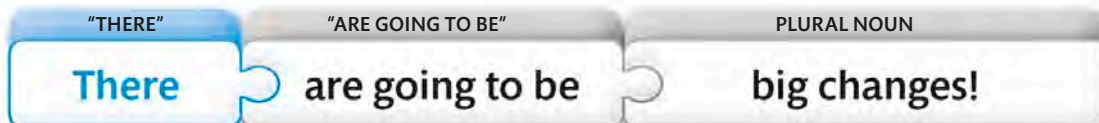
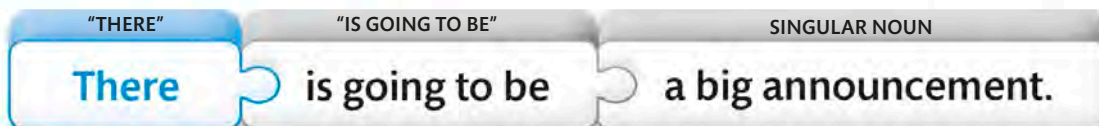
There will be a train strike next week.

There is going to be a meeting at the office.

There will be replacement bus services.

There are going to be severe delays.

HOW TO FORM



86 Introductory "it"

"It" is often used when a sentence has no clear subject, and is sometimes known as a dummy subject or empty subject.

See also:

Defining relative clauses **81**

Non-defining relative clauses **82**

86.1 "IT" AS A DUMMY SUBJECT

"It" is used to talk about the time, dates, distance, or the weather. In these sentences, "it" doesn't have a specific meaning, but it serves as the grammatical subject of the sentence.

"It" can be used to talk about the time.

What time is **it**?

It's 3 o'clock.



"It" can be used to talk about distances.

How far is **it** to the beach?

It's 1 mile that way.



"It" can be used to talk about the day, date, month, or year.

What day is **it**?

It's Tuesday.



"It" can be used to talk about the weather.

What's the weather like today?

It's cloudy and raining.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

It's 2 o'clock in the morning.
Please stop singing!



I'm going to walk to work.
It's only two miles away.



It's the 21st century. I can't believe you still use that phone.



I'm surprised that **it's** so sunny in the middle of January.



86.2 INTRODUCTORY "IT"

Certain set phrases beginning "it is" can be used at the start of a sentence. "It" is the subject of the sentence, and can be used to express a general truth or belief.



"IT" CLAUSE

INFINITIVE CLAUSE

It is easy **to** make mistakes in a new language.

Some "it" clauses are followed by a "to" infinitive.

"IT" CLAUSE

"THAT" CLAUSE

It is a shame **that** so many people give up.

Some "it" clauses are followed by "that" clauses.

FURTHER EXAMPLES INTRODUCTORY "IT"



It is important **to** be relaxed about making mistakes.



It's unlikely **that** you will be comfortable speaking aloud at first.



It is essential **to** give yourself time to study regularly.



It's true **that** being able to speak a second language is useful.



It is difficult **to** remember facts if you don't write them down.



It is often said **that** going to the country of the language helps.

87 Shifting focus

"It" clauses, "what" clauses, or moving a noun to the front of a sentence can all be used to put emphasis on a certain word or phrase.

See also:

Types of verbs **49** Defining relative clauses **81**

Non-defining relative clauses **82**

87.1 FOCUSING WITH "IT" CLAUSES

Part of a sentence can be emphasized by adding "it is" or "it was" before it, and "that" after it. This can correct a misunderstanding or emphasize something unexpected.

You've met my friend John before, haven't you?



This stresses that it wasn't John who I met before.

"That" is added before the main verb.

No, **it was your friend Michael that** I met.

"It is" or "it was" is added before the noun phrase to be focused.

"Your friend Michael" is now the focus of the sentence.

The main verb moves to the end.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

The second clause is a relative clause. It is most commonly introduced by "that," "which," or "who." "When" and "where" can also be used, but they're less formal.

It is the engine that I need to replace.



It was summertime when Zoe last saw her cousins.



It was the doctor who I needed to call.



It was in a bar where Olly first met his wife.



It was the cold weather which made me sick.



It was the price which changed my mind.



It was my colleague who prepared the food.



It was the toaster that set off the fire alarm.



87.2 FOCUSING WITH "WHAT" CLAUSES

Simple statements can be made more emphatic by adding "what" with the verb "be." This structure is often used with verbs expressing emotions, such as "love," "hate," "like," and "want."

Would you like to go to a movie?



No, thanks. **What** I really want **is** to go to bed early.

"What" is added to the start of the sentence.

The focused information is put outside the "what" clause.

This has more emphasis than "I really want to go to bed early."

FURTHER EXAMPLES

What we hated **was** the bad service.

What I like here **is** the weather.

What they loved the most **were** the museums.

What she enjoys the most **is** the music.

87.3 FOCUSING WITH A NOUN

If the subject of the sentence cannot be replaced with "what" (for example, people, places, or times) a general noun that has a similar meaning can be used.



I've been to many countries.

The place I most enjoyed visiting **was** Nepal.



I've read about some great people.

The woman I respect the most **is** Marie Curie.



I don't know why the show was canceled.

The reason they gave **was** not good enough.



I have lots of fun memories.

The evening I remember most **is** my first concert.

88 Inversion

Reversing the normal order of words, or inversion, can be used for emphasis or a sense of drama. It is common after certain types of adverbials.

See also:

Present simple 1 Types of verbs 49

Adverbs of frequency 102

88.1 INVERSION AFTER NEGATIVE ADVERBIALS

In more formal or literary texts, inversion of a verb and its subject is used for emphasis after negative adverbial phrases like “not only,” “not since,” and “only when.”



In this simple sentence, the subject comes before the verb.

She is a famous singer. She is also a very good actor.

Not only is she a famous singer, **but** she's **also** a very good actor.

After the negative adverbial, the subject and the verb swap places.

“But” is optional.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

The auxiliary and subject swap places.

Not since my childhood **have I** enjoyed a performance so much.

Not until the performance was over **did he** look up at the audience.

Where there is no auxiliary verb, “do” is used.

Only if it stops raining **will the race** go ahead this afternoon.

Only when he emerged from the car **did the fans** start cheering.

Only after the race **did he** realize what he had achieved.

Little did they know how lucky they are to be successful.

Little did they realize how difficult fame would be.



88.2 INVERSION AFTER TIME ADVERBIALS

Inversion can be used after time adverbials that are negative or restrictive, such as “no sooner” and “never before.” This emphasizes the time at which something happens, or happened.

In this simple sentence, the subject comes before the verb.

Tina **had** just released an album when she starred in her first movie.



The subject (“Tina”) and the auxiliary verb (“had”) swap places.
No sooner **had** **Tina** released an album **than** she starred in her first movie.



FURTHER EXAMPLES

Hardly **had** **she** stepped out of the car **when** fans surrounded her.



Rarely **do** **you** meet a celebrity with such talent and style.



Never **before** **had** **a** **song** reached the top of the charts so quickly.



Only **sometimes** **does** **it** not snow during the ski season.



88.3 INVERSION AFTER “SO” AND “NEITHER”

In order to agree with a positive statement, “be” and its subject, or an auxiliary and its subject can be inverted after “so.” For a negative statement, the same is done after “neither.” For a sentence that doesn’t have an auxiliary, “do” is used when it is inverted.

I’ve never been to China.

Neither **have** **I**.



I need to get some new clothes.

So **do** **I**.



When there is no auxiliary verb, “do” is used.

I’m excited for the party tonight.

So **am** **I**!



89 Ellipsis

Some words can be left out of a sentence to avoid repetition, or when the meaning can be understood without them. This is called ellipsis.

See also:

Question words 35

Coordinating conjunctions 110

89.1 ELLIPSIS AFTER CONJUNCTIONS

When two phrases are joined by “and,” “but,” or “or” it is common to leave out repeated words of various kinds.

He bought tickets, **but** [he] didn't go.

Often a repeated subject is dropped after “and,” “but,” or “or.”



She loved the original **and** [she loved] the sequel.

If the meaning remains clear, a repeated subject and verb can be dropped.



I'm happy to go out **or** [I'm happy to] stay home.

If the meaning is clear, words that have already been mentioned and do not require repetition can be omitted.



TIP

Ellipsis is not normally possible after conjunctions other than “and,” “but,” and “or.”

FURTHER EXAMPLES

She said she'd call, **but** she didn't [call].



I hope my camera works, **but** I don't think it will [work].



You can watch the documentary **or** [you can watch] the cartoon.



Please may I have a knife **and** [a] fork?



I'd love to be a boxer, **but** I'm not strong enough [to be a boxer].



I can't decide if I want a burger **or** [I want] a hotdog.



89.2 CONVERSATIONAL ELLIPSIS

Words can also be left out of sentences if the meaning can be understood from the context. This kind of ellipsis does not have strict rules, and is very common in informal everyday speech, particularly when giving replies.

What time does the movie start?



Eight.

[It starts at eight o'clock.]

What kind of popcorn would you like?



Salted, please.

[I would like salted popcorn, please.]

What did you think of the film?



Complete nonsense.

[I thought the film was complete nonsense.]

89.3 QUESTION WORD CLAUSES

Clauses can be dropped after question words such as "who," "what," "where," and "how."

Somebody stole my watch, but I don't know **who** [stole it].



I want to buy my dad a present, but I'm not sure **what** [to buy him].



I want to go away, but I can't decide **where** [to go].



I need to fix my car, and I'm fairly certain I know **how** [to fix it].



90 Shortening infinitives

Phrases with infinitives can sometimes be reduced or shortened to prevent repetition. This helps language to sound more natural.

See also:
Infinitives and participles 51

90.1 REDUCED INFINITIVES

Instead of repeating the whole infinitive clause, "to" can be used on its own if the meaning remains clear.

Let's see that new DJ tonight.



I don't really want **to** [see the new DJ].

If the previous sentence or clause contains the verb "be," then the full infinitive "to be" must be used, rather than just "to."

She **was** really critical of the new album.



It's difficult not **to be** [critical of it].
The singing is awful!

FURTHER EXAMPLES



He asked me if I wanted to cook tonight, but I'd prefer not **to**.



All my friends are going to the basketball game, but I don't want **to**.



I was going to bring an umbrella, but I decided not **to**.



There **are** more flowers in the garden than there used **to be**.



This packaging **isn't** recyclable, but it ought **to be**.

90.2 DROPPING THE ENTIRE INFINITIVE CLAUSE

The entire infinitive clause can be dropped, or “to” can be kept on its own after some verbs, such as “agree,” “ask,” “forget,” “promise,” “start,” and “try.”



Chris is going to come to the show. He { **promised** [to come].
promised to [come].

The same structure can also be used after some nouns, such as: “chance,” “plans,” “promise,” “idea,” and “opportunity.”

I haven't seen this band before. I'd love the { **chance** [to see them].
chance to [see them].

The same structure can also be used after certain adjectives, such as “delighted,” “afraid,” “willing,” and “determined.”

I want to perform on stage, but I'm { **afraid** [to perform on stage].
afraid to [perform on stage].

FURTHER EXAMPLES

We need to leave soon, but I'm not **ready**.



I would travel the world if I had the **money**.



I want to go out, but I haven't got any **plans**.



I would never do a bungee jump. I don't have the **courage**.



They told me I could join the team if I **wanted to**.



I'm going to pass my driving test. I'm **determined to**.



Remind me to lock the door, or I'll **forget to**.



Thanks for asking me to come to your wedding. I'd **love to**.



90.3 VERBS WITH COMPLEMENTS

The entire infinitive clause cannot be left out after verbs that have complement clauses (phrases that complete their meaning), such as: "advise," "afford," "be able," "choose," "decide," "expect," "hate," "hope," "love," "need," and "prefer." "To" must be used after these.

**We want to see a band tonight,
but we really can't afford to.**



FURTHER EXAMPLES

I tried to get to the front of the crowd, but I wasn't able to.



I had piano lessons as a child, but I didn't choose to.



You could bring some snacks along, but you don't need to.



I have never been to the opera, but I would love to.



90.4 "WANT" AND "WOULD LIKE"

The "to" of the infinitive clause is not usually dropped after "want" or "would like."

**He asked if I wanted to go,
and I said I would like to.**



In "if" clauses, however, "to" can be used on its own or the whole infinitive can be dropped after "want" or "would like."

**You can come with us if you { want.
want to.**

The "to" cannot be dropped in a negative clause.

Don't go to the concert if you don't want to.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

We could play golf this weekend, if you want.



I asked my friends to play, but they didn't want to.



90.5 SHORTENING INFINITIVES

Sometimes "to" can be used instead of repeating the whole infinitive.

Do you go to Spain every year?



We **used to**.

[We used to go to Spain every year.]

After nouns and adjectives, sometimes the whole infinitive can be left out.

Are you ready to leave?



No, I'm **not ready** yet.

[I'm not ready to leave yet.]

However the verbs "be" and "have" are not usually omitted when they are used for possession.

She isn't paid much, but she **ought to be**.

"She ought to" is wrong. →

[She ought to be paid more.]



It's also not usually possible to leave out "to" after "like," "love," "hate," "prefer," "want," and "choose."

Do you want to go to the festival?



I'd **like to**.

"I'd like" is wrong. →

Do you want to cook tonight?



I'd **prefer not to**.

"I'd prefer not" is unlikely. →

91 Substitution

As well as ellipsis (leaving words out), repetition can be avoided by replacing some phrases with shorter ones. This is called substitution.

See also:

Countable and uncountable nouns 70

The past simple 7

91.1 SUBSTITUTING WITH "ONE / ONES" AND "SOME"

"One" and "ones" can be used to replace singular and plural countable nouns.

"Ones" can only be used to refer to a specific group of things. "Some" is used when the group is not defined, and to replace uncountable nouns.

SINGLE COUNTABLE NOUNS

Does anyone have a copy of the book?



Yes, I have **one**.

"One" replaces
"a copy of the book."

PLURAL COUNTABLE NOUNS

Are there any bookstores near here?



Yes, there are **some** on Main Street.

There are **a few great ones** across town.

"Ones" can only be used if
modified to define the specific
things that are meant.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I got a raise at work, even though I didn't ask for **one**.



I knitted **some** scarves and sold **a few**.



"A few" can be used instead of "some."

Those new computers look great. I want **one** for my birthday.



I went shopping for dresses and found **some lovely ones**.



I need a new phone, but I don't know where would be the best place to buy **one**.



I saw there were new pastries at the bakery, so I thought I'd try **some**.



91.2 SUBSTITUTING WITH "DO"

Verbs and their complements can also be used with substitute words to avoid repetition. "Do" and "did" are often used to replace present and past simple tense verbs, for example.

There's water everywhere.
Should I call a plumber?



Oh no! Yes, **do**.

"Do" prevents repetition of 'call a plumber'

I **think** this homework is really difficult.

I **did** too, so I asked for help.

Different forms of "do" replace "think."



I **don't**. It's easy.

FURTHER EXAMPLES

I need to brush my teeth more.



Yes, it's important that you **do**.

I thought the exam was really easy.



I **didn't**. I really struggled.

91.3 SUBSTITUTING WITH "SO" AND "NOT"

In positive clauses after verbs of thinking, "so" can be used to avoid repetition. "Not" or "not... so" are used in negative sentences.

Will she be signing copies of her book?

I **hope so**!



No, I **don't think so**.

I'm **afraid not**.

FURTHER EXAMPLES SUBSTITUTING NEGATIVES WITH "NOT... SO" AND "NOT"

It **appears not**.

It **doesn't seem so**.

"Not" or "not... so" are used with "appear," "seem," and "suppose."



I **don't imagine so**.

"Not... so" is used with "think," "believe," "expect," and "imagine."

I **hope not**.

"Not" is used with "hope," "assume," and "be afraid" (when "afraid" means "sorry").